

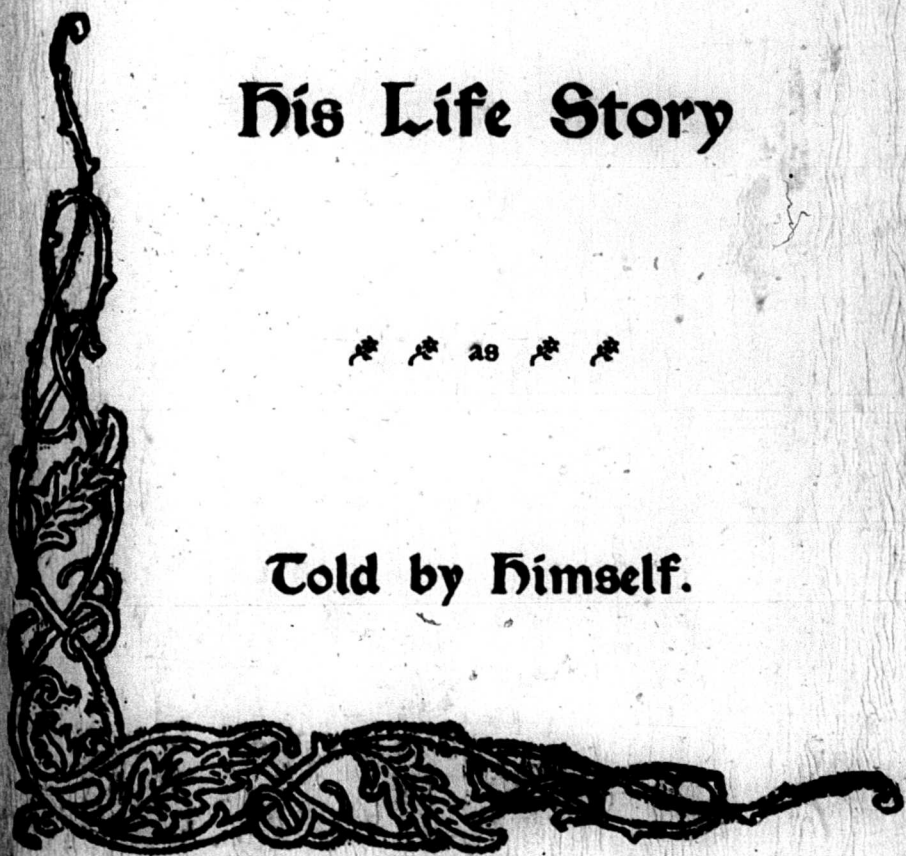
REV. SAMUEL HARRISON.



His Life Story



Told by Himself.



Samuel Harrison



1849.

Rev. SAMUEL
HARRISON.



1899.

PORTRAITS
OF

Rev. SAMUEL HARRISON

HIS LIFE STORY

* * AS * *

TOLD BY HIMSELF.

THE following sketch was prepared at the suggestion and earnest request of Rev. Dr. Addison Ballard, of the New York University. Although exceeding considerably the limits at first contemplated, the author hopes that enough of at least local and personal interest may be found in its pages to justify their publication and perusal.

Pittsfield, Mass., April 15, 1899.

Rev. SAMUEL HARRISON,

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

 I have to say in the first place that if, under God, I am anything or have become anything in this world, it is through a godly mother's influence. She was a member of the Rev. Spencer H. Cone's church, Oliver Street, New York. He was a distinguished minister of the gospel in his day. My years, prior to reaching my ninth year, were spent in New York. My birth place, however, was Philadelphia, where I was born April 15, 1818. It was probably when I was some three years old that my mother took me to New York where she lived with one of the families who owned my father and mother and myself. My father and mother were slaves, born in Savannah, Georgia, and, at the time of my birth, my mother being in Philadelphia, she was her mistress's waiting maid. Her master's name was John Bolton. Dr. Cummings, formerly of Williamstown, was acquainted with him and other members of the Bolton family. Some time after my birth my mother returned to Savannah and at this time, I think, emancipation papers were put into her hand. And I think it was probable that all their slaves were emancipated. I heard my mother say that all were given their choice to remain in this country or emigrate to Africa. Some went to Africa. My mother returned north and so did the Bolton family. My mother lived with them in New York on Liberty Street; that is, one family, and the other on Wall Street. I used to visit them very frequently when I was a small boy, and since entering the ministry I have corresponded with some members of the family. I attended school in New York until I was near nine years old, when I was sent to Philadelphia to be placed on the shoe bench to learn the trade of a shoe maker with an uncle who was a minister and had been

born a slave in South Carolina. It was at a very early age to be put to a trade. But my step-father had become a very intemperate man and beyond my mother's endurance. I was the object of his abuse when he was under the influence of liquor, as was also my mother, and, as it would lessen her troubles if I was away, especially as my uncle was in comfortable circumstances, in the month of December, cold and bleak, I was sent to Philadelphia, illy clad, with a straw hat on my head which was cool enough for any purpose. It was on a Saturday night, so I rested on the Lord's day and when Monday came I was in the shop trying to make a shoe thread.

I remained under my uncle's roof as an apprentice until I was eighteen years old. When near seventeen years old, one of those changes occurred which sometimes determine a man's character for his whole future. I was far from being what I ought to have been for a boy having so devoted a christian mother. Times without number she called me to kneel with her at the bedside when she lived in New York before she sent me from her to Philadelphia to learn my trade. One of the streets upon which we lived in New York was Leonard Street, opposite where the Tombs are now. At that time it was called the Corporation Lot. At another time we lived on Collect Street, near Leonard. Now it is called Center Street. Next we lived on Mott Street. The last place was Rosevelt Street. From there I was sent to Philadelphia. My step-father had gone from bad to worse in his intemperate course of life which increased my mother's trials. In her distress she cried unto the Lord and he heard her. She was burdened for me in regard to the future. Philadelphia was a large city and there were many inducements for a boy to wrong doing. My mother was a strict attendant at church and she always had me go with her; so she always knew where I was on the Sabbath. After I had entered upon my apprenticeship, being shut up from Monday morning until Saturday night, I spent my Sundays, after Sunday School, roving about the country. Sometimes I would cross the Delaware River to New Jersey and spend my Sabbaths. After a few years my mother came to Philadelphia to live and she resumed her old habit of hav-

ing me go to church with her. She was always in time for service though it was a long distance to church. Her last pastor in Philadelphia was A. D. Gillet, D. D., who was called to New York.

The occurrence to which I alluded was this. There was a deep religious interest in the Second Presbyterian Church composed of colored persons. The church was located on St. Mary Street. My mother had been attending the meetings and finally urged me to go the following evening. This I promised to do, but, when the evening came, I got among some of my companions and spent the evening with them. On the following morning, before going to work, I called on my mother. She asked if I went to meeting the preceding evening. I had a frivolous excuse for not going. And then and there she talked so sharply to me that I felt ashamed of myself and I made up my mind that Monday night to go. And I did go. The announcement was made that on Tuesday evening there would be a meeting in the north part of the city. I made up my mind to go though it was a long distance from my home. I became deeply interested and I was impelled, by some unseen power, to follow up those meetings. The next night I attended and the meeting was deeply interesting to me. The invitation was given that all who desired to seek the Saviour should get down on their knees. Poor me got down with the rest. I went home after the meeting and knelt and prayed and retired, and on that cot peace came to wicked heart and I felt like a new person. The next morning I went to my mother and told her I had found Christ. She could hardly believe it. I know I felt differently from what I had formerly. I could not be dissuaded from that belief. Then there was an invitation to those who desired to join the church to meet with the session at a designated time. I met with the session but they put me on probation for three months. This was not according to Presbyterian usage. But they had an object which was to ascertain whether I was sincere or not. They also spoke to my uncle about it. I was admitted to the church at the next communion.

It was not a great while after this that I was inclined to

seek for more schooling, having in mind the ministry. As I have already stated, I was taken from school when I was near nine years old and placed on the shoe bench. I had no other school advantages until my eighteenth year. Then I went to school in the morning and in the afternoon worked on the shoe bench. This I did for some time. Then I was taken in charge of by the American Education Society. Then I gave myself wholly to work on the shoe bench so as to secure some clothing which I needed very much. With that end in view I saved what I could to secure clothing. I got some together and then was directed to go to Peterboro, Madison County, New York, to a school which was supported wholly by Gerrit Smith, Esq., the abolitionist and philanthropist. He had provided a teacher and books and board and house room. The scholars were to work four hours a day. The work was ditching some swamp lands owned by Mr. Smith. The most of the students were farmers and were accustomed to that kind of work. I was not, but I experienced no ill effects from it. The school was established upon the system of manual labor. We had not been there long when we learned that the school would be disbanded in October of that year. Then we were directed to go to Hudson, Ohio, on the Western Reserve. We started for that place. I think it was the latter part of 1836. From Peterboro we went by wagon eight miles to the Erie Canal and took the boat to Buffalo, then by steamer to Cleveland, Ohio, whence we were to be conveyed to Hudson. There were three of us in company. It was the latter part of October, 1836, I think. We had some trials on our way to Cleveland from Buffalo. It was very cold crossing Lake Erie and we could get no accommodations, either for sleeping or eating. We were not allowed in the second cabin even. There was no prohibition to our going into the steerage. But there were emigrants there and they seemed to be packed like sardines. They were Germans going west. I have been frequently on the ocean, but I never saw so many playing Jonah before nor since. It was so rough on the lake that we were compelled to put into several ports between Buffalo and Cleveland. There were no railroads except the

Albany and Utica. The canal was the fashionable mode of travelling. You had your choice either to take a line boat or a packet, which was another name for express. The line boats carried both freight and passengers, the fare on which was one and one-half cents per mile. They would cover three miles per hour. Our means being limited, we had to economize. You could buy crackers and cheese or cake and pie every few miles on the tow path. From Albany to Buffalo it was some three hundred and sixty miles. The first night out from Albany, being tired, I retired early. When it was time for the passengers to retire, I was surprised to hear the captain ask in an audible tone whether any of the passengers in the cabin had any objection to a colored man sleeping in the cabin. There was no response and so I remained in my berth. After this we got along very comfortably until we reached Rochester. There travellers got on and off. Some had reached their destination. While we were tied up there, a big burly white man came on board and wanted to know if there were any abolitionists on board. I never knew what his object was; I only knew that abolitionism was at a discount.

It was a very pleasant trip to Buffalo. When we reached Cleveland at night, after forty-eight hours passage from Buffalo, we found an apology for a lodging house. When we retired we could see the stars through the roof. It was cold but we lived through it. When daylight came we started out to find what conveyance we could get to Hudson, some five miles distant. We hired a wagon and driver, who charged seven dollars for all and baggage. We had not gone far when a man came up and took hold of the headstall of the horses and swore that we should not go another step; that we must go back to Cleveland. He kept us parleying for a long while. Finally, when he got ready, he released his hold of the horses' heads and we drove on. The roads were in a very bad condition, and our horses I think fairly represented Pharaoh's lean kine. We had corduroy roads part of the way. We had not gotten more than half of the way when one of the horses gave out. Then we were in a fix. After waiting a while to give

the horse a little time to recuperate, along came a man with one of those big Pennsylvania wagons which were common in those days when railroads were very uncommon. Our driver traded with this man, who had a horse which was hitched to his wagon with a halter. After the trade was consummated on our way we went, hoping soon to reach Hudson. It was nearly dark and we had about five miles to compass before reaching our destination. On the way three men drove past us on horses as swift as it was possible to ride. I thought it strange but did not attach any importance to it, not anticipating any trouble from it. I was surprised, when we reached the inn, to see these men awaiting our coming. I suppose two were officers. They said they had come to take us back to Cleveland, as they had a money claim against the driver. He must pay or the whole party must return with them to Cleveland. The driver plead with us to let him have the money to pay these men, at the same time promising to carry out his contract with us. He did as he agreed. He took us to Hudson and I presume it took all the money he had to cancel his debt.

The next morning after reaching Hudson, we started out to hunt up the faculty. The President, George E. Pierce, was away east in the interest of the Institute, I presume. Most of the other teachers were away. Professor Nutting's kindness was expressed by inviting us to eat at his table until we could make other arrangements, which offer was gratefully accepted. This continued for a few days, when we secured apartments in the dormitory. We were to wait until President Pierce returned. We boarded ourselves, cooking our own food meanwhile. There was opportunity for us to work at anything which we could do at six cents an hour. One of our men was a farmer, another was a painter, myself being a shoemaker. When the term commenced we found employment at our several branches of labor. The painter found work to do in his line. They had about finished a new building for a chapel and recitation rooms. These had to be painted and it made one less to be employed outside the campus. After awhile I found work in a shoe shop in the village, studying

and working on the bench. My employer was unfair in his treatment of me. He wanted me to work for him during the hours of study, and, with this end in view, he urged me to use a room right over his shop which was very comfortably warmed. I moved from the dormitory to his apartment. He then wished me to leave my books for his accommodation. I found out his object. It was detrimental to me and the object for which I left home. I told him I would return to the dormitory again, which I did. It did not sit pleasantly with him however. He did not believe in negro education. I will say here that all depended upon what President Pierce and the faculty might decide to do as to our admission in the lower classes in the preparatory department. There was no objection which we learned of; so we commenced the elementary studies in Greek and Latin under tutors Clark and Wright. We were in regular classes and I saw no difference between the usage accorded to us and the white students. The white students showed a little displeasure at first, but finally it blew over.

About this time two new professors came to the institution—E. P. Barrows from New York and L. P. Hickok from Connecticut. Both were very fine gentlemen, for whom I had a loving regard. I sawed wood for Professor Hickok many an hour for six cents an hour. I have met Professor Hickok many times since. He has gone to his reward. One of my companions, who went with me from Gerrit Smith's school, died while in the preparatory department of the college. The other was charged with theft from a fellow student, which caused his exclusion from the school. I then was left alone. I struggled along in consequence of pecuniary embarrassment until I had to succumb to the necessity of giving up at least for a time. In the summer of 1839 I made up my mind to try to raise money enough to return to Philadelphia. I succeeded in getting enough wild cat money together, as I supposed, to reach my home; not knowing that western money was more and more at a discount the further east I might travel. But this I learned to my confusion and humiliation when I reached Buffalo. All I had was seven dollars. Five of this it cost to

get to Albany, leaving me two dollars for my board and passage to New York. I reached Albany all right, but having only one dollar in my pocket. The regular fare to New York was \$3.50 and I had not a third of the amount. The good book says "Seek and ye shall find." I sought and I found a steamer bound for New York, which was a tow boat. I went on board and learned the fare was \$1.50. I asked what sort of a captain they had on board. I told some of the men that I was a school boy from the west on my way home without money and that my destination was Philadelphia. They told me if I could arrange with the captain they would see that I had plenty to eat and drink and a place to sleep. I did not stop to look for the captain. I went directly to the canal boat, shouldered my trunk, and back to the tow boat. On board I went and unshouldered my trunk and sat down on it, hoping to introduce myself to the captain after we had got down the river a piece. You know it is enjoined by the apostle to be swift to hear and slow to speak. We were going down the river very comfortably. A gentleman was promenading the deck. I stepped from my seat on the trunk and asked him if he was the captain. He said that he was. Then I told him where I came from and where I was going, but that I had but one dollar to my name and that he could have that, and also that I had some books in my trunk; if he wished them he could have them. He took the dollar and said nothing.

We were near two days getting to New York. I recollect one of the men on the tow boat saying to me, "You see we are in sight of New York; what are you going to do now?" I said I hardly knew, but my mother had lived with some families in New York by the name of Bolton. If I could find them I would be all right. I was told to get a directory and look for that name, which I did and found their address and went to the house, expecting to find at least some of the family at home. But I was disappointed in that, but their housekeeper was there, to whom I was an entire stranger. I told her who I was and where I came from; that I was on my way to Philadelphia; that my means were gone. The housekeeper said she did not know me or my mother, but, from what she had

heard the Boltons say of my mother, I was welcome to stay there. The family were away at their country seat. Meeting with so kindly a welcome my doubts and fears were gone; so I turned in for the night. The next day was the Sabbath. I went to church without a cent in my pocket. The church I attended was a colored Presbyterian one. The pastor I had seen and heard in our church in Philadelphia. After the service I went forward and introduced myself as a student from the West. He received me very kindly and invited me to his house to take dinner with him. I spent a very agreeable time with him. He was to talk to his people in the afternoon. Three sermons a day was very common among our people at that time. I was much surprised when he asked me about a colored man who had gone from New York years before in pursuit of an education. He was at the Western Reserve College when my companions and myself were there. But he passed as an Asiatic. He never held any communication with us. He probably felt it would be prejudicial to his interest if he had identified himself with the negro race. This is the only solution which I can give.

I remained with my kind hostess who gave me the privilege of staying within doors until I could do better, which I began to do after the Sabbath had passed. I had an old bull's eye English watch which I had taken to pieces, intending to put it together again. My attempt was a complete failure, so I had to relinquish my purpose and sell the silver. It was a double case. I got one dollar and twelve cents for it. I laid the dollar aside, hoping in some way to be further replenished. I would get my breakfast where I stayed; then go out into the street and if I got hungry before tea time, would buy some crackers, which would serve me until I should return in the evening and get my supper, and then stay in the remainder of the night. This I did until Tuesday night. Then I thought perhaps I could borrow from the Rev. Theodore S. Wright enough money to pay my fare to Philadelphia, promising him to return it as soon as I could. I went to him and told him my pecuniary circumstances, and promised him I would pay him by sending the money to New York. I was able to reim-

burse him. I started for Pier No. 1 on the following morning, with my trunk on my shoulders. It was earlier in the day than I had supposed. I was stopped by a watchman who wanted to know where I was going. I told him that I was on my way to Philadelphia by boat. He said nothing more and I went on. There was no stir about the dock and the boat did not leave until 7 A. M.; so I waited until that time, sitting most of the time on my trunk. When the time came there was a great rush to get aboard. The people were returning from their summer resorts. Passengers were crowding around the breakfast tables of the boat and I was asked to help wait on the tables with the promise of getting my breakfast, for I had had none and had no money to buy any. I was short twenty-five cents of my fare. I helped as well as I knew how, but it was not satisfactory to those who asked me to assist them. Many a curse I got that morning and a good breakfast.

I told the steward that I was short twenty-five cents of my fare. He gave me the amount, so I was enabled to reach home once more. When I was given twenty-five cents, which completed the balance for my fare to Philadelphia, I was relieved of considerable embarrassment and I felt that no other obstruction would intervene. But a little incident occurred which perplexed me to some extent, of which, however, I was happily relieved. The housekeeper of the Bolton family, of whom I have spoken, gave me a bundle in which were two shawls; one for my mother and the other for a fellow servant with my mother in the Bolton family when they were in the South. The housekeeper had them in her care to send them to the persons for whom they were intended. She gave them to me to take to Philadelphia. I had the package when I took the boat at Pier No. 1, but when we reached Amboy to take the cars for Bordentown I missed my package and I did not know whether I had left it on the cars or had brought it on the boat. I looked up and down on the deck and the prospect for finding the lost package was not very bright. There happened to be an old friend on board the boat who was on his way to Philadelphia. I told him of the missing package and that I could not conceive whether I had left it on the boat or

on the cars. He left me standing where I had mentioned the fact to him. He had been gone from me but a few minutes when he returned and asked me if I could identify the package if I saw it. I told him I believed I could. He told me to look where he pointed his cane. I was quick to do so. He pointed to his right side. There two Irish women were seated near each other; one of them sat partly on the package. I pulled it out and regained what was lost. It was probably nearly two hours run from Bordentown, New Jersey, to Philadelphia. Having reached Philadelphia, the first thing was to find my mother. She was surprised to see me. I had written to her that I had reached New York and wanted where-with to get home. That very afternoon she borrowed five dollars and mailed it to me. She lived in a lawyer's family and he directed the letter for her. He wrote to the post office officials and the letter was returned. All is well that ends well.

I had returned to my native place and, although I had met with a temporary defeat in the object for which I had left my home about three months before, my mother was glad to see me, and so were all my friends, none more so than the members of the church to which I belonged. After the novelty of my return had worn off, and that took but a little while, I began to cast about in my mind what I must do. The thought of the ministry still clung to me. I thought at first that I would find employment at my trade. But a friend of mine informed me that a gentleman, whose name was Judah Dobson, wanted a man in his book store. He was an importer of novels and of medical works published in Europe and, I presume, of theological works. The foremost ministers of the city were Mr. Dobson's patrons. They were very agreeable men indeed. If they had been Presbyterians it would have been very helpful to me because denominationally my proclivities were that way. I was born a Calvinist, I believe. If I was not, I was like Topsy, I "grewed so." I was a great admirer of Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia. I do not think I could make a Baptist or a Methodist or an Episcopalian, and yet I believe there are followers of Christ among

them all. I was in Mr. Dobson's employ some eight months at twelve dollars per month. It afforded me an opportunity to read books when not otherwise engaged. I had my Sabbaths and every night of the week except Friday night, when they had company. I had then to attend the call of the door bell and bring in the cake and wine for the company. I always put them on the table and retired, and, if there were no gentlemen present, I uncorked the bottles.

As the spring was coming on I felt that a change was desirable and so I intimated to Mr. Dobson that I had a trade and was desirous to work at it and that I was under the necessity of leaving him. He was very much surprised and protested against it. But I had decided to take the step and I left at the designated time. I soon secured a position on the shoe bench at South Third Street, Philadelphia. I did well as a journeyman, earning tolerably good pay. But the first twenty dollars I earned my employer cheated me out of, so I was out twenty dollars, but I worked on, and, by economy, secured a little money and then I started out on my own hook and got along quite comfortably. I had a class in the Sabbath School, and I became associated in the temperance work with some Christian men who carried on meetings in the south part of the city on the street corners. At this time there was a society of young men who were mechanics. They had their anniversaries and orations and dinners. On one of these occasions, I was invited to give an address, which I gave at the appointed time. To my surprise, a copy was asked for publication. I had myself so poor an opinion of my effort that I did not give them a copy. So much is lost to the world! Another class of young men formed a literary society of which I became a member. Its name was the Demosthenian Institute. They had weekly meetings for debates and lectures. Prominent gentlemen of the city would give lectures, which I found very helpful. I gave much time to reading after my day's work was done and for hours after the time of retiring. I was always a strict temperance man, and tobacco I conscientiously rejected and have done so, even to the present hour. I know not what record awaits me, but

these failings I am exempt from. I was not given to much company and probably this had something to do with me in this regard.

I found at this time a young woman, an orphan thrown out upon the world with no one to really care for her when she was quite a child. She had brothers and sisters but none of them cared for her. They were poor and living under slave laws in the state of Delaware, from which many of the colored people came to reside in Philadelphia. Our acquaintance began before I had entered my teens as my mother lived on the same street with the people who took her in her orphanage. I always had regard for her and our friendship resulted in marriage. I was doing business on South Second Street, below Chestnut, where I continued several years, after which I secured another place opposite the old Custom House, further south on the same street. But these adventures did not facilitate the object which I had in mind. I labored under the disadvantage of paying double rents, one for my family and the other for my place of business. There were two fires and a long distance between shop and home, and sometimes it was perilous to walk the distance as the mob spirit was at times in the ascendancy in the City of Brotherly Love, and the colored people were the victims of these mobs, especially in that part of the city where the Celtic population was numerically strong. At that time our people were disfranchised. A significant Providence intervened. The man from whom I hired my shop, such was his increase in business, wanted the part which I occupied, so I was compelled to move. This was some six years after I was married. I moved my business to where my family lived, and the Providence which I call intervening was this. For years I had the burden of two rents, and now I had only one and one fire, and I saved the distance which I had before to walk. I hung out my sign, had comfortable patronage and began to save a little money.

I realized, however, that to be successful I must leave Philadelphia and my friends. I began to cast about where I could go to further the object for which I first left Philadelphia in 1836. I thought perhaps the southern part of New Jersey

would be a good place to locate. But a friend of mine, who was at Gerrit Smith's school, when I was there for a few months, thought I would like Newark, New Jersey. I concluded to visit that city. I reached the home of my friend, who made me welcome, in the latter part of June, 1847. My first business was to find work at my trade by which to support my family. It was nearly six weeks before anything turned up of an encouraging character. Then I secured a place where I opened a shoe shop and began to hammer leather and mend and make shoes. In a little time I had a crowd about my window and door. You would have thought that I was a show. They plied me with questions as to where I came from and where I learned the trade. I told one man that I learned it in Philadelphia. Then he asked if I said in the penitentiary. That stirred up my irascibility. He understood me before he left. I had no other annoyance after this. In a few weeks I returned for my family and moved them, with my effects, to my new home, bidding adieu to the friends of my early childhood, youth and manhood. It was like commencing life anew. I soon found friends in Newark, some of whom continue to the present, but some are fallen asleep. I told my friend from whom the invitation came to visit Newark that my mind was upon the ministry and I thought it best to place myself under the care of the Presbytery of Newark. I found a difficulty in securing a place for my family to live. Prejudice was stronger in Newark than I supposed it was. I had to submit to some privations to which I was unaccustomed, but they were all disciplinary as I now look back upon them. I was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Newark. Rev. Dr. Brinsmade, the predecessor of Dr. Todd of the First Church, Pittsfield, was pastor of the Third Church of Newark. He presented me with Dick's Theology, in two volumes, and Cruden's Concordance. He secured a teacher for me in theology. I gave up my shop and moved to the suburbs of Newark where I did some missionary work in the outskirts, and I conducted meetings in Orange, a village some three miles from Newark, on Sunday evenings. I travelled on foot back and forth, and when the pastor's va-

cation came and the elders failed to secure a supply, I had to help them out. Mr. Rogers, the minister, had been away, probably to Pittsfield. When he returned he told a friend of mine that he had a call for me up in Massachusetts. When I saw Mr. Rogers he told me that a church in Pittsfield desired me to do missionary work among them. I, upon his advice, opened correspondence with them. This was in the early autumn of 1849. They invited me to come and see them. I accepted their invitation and spent two Sabbaths here. The days were beautiful. After the second Sabbath I returned home and in a few weeks the people, through the committee of the church, gave me an invitation to come and be one among them. They offered to give me \$275.00 a year and an annual donation, and also to give me a month's pay in advance to defray moving expenses. I made arrangements to leave for Pittsfield the 6th or 7th of January, 1850. We reached Pittsfield about 4 P. M. The snow was nearly knee deep. We were carried about two miles from the church, near Onota Lake, on the south side of the road, where we stayed a few weeks and we took some rooms until we could do better nearer the center of the town. In the month of April we moved upon the street where we now are. We engaged one-half of a dwelling house. We had five rooms. There we lived two or three years.

I must go back a little. I have not said anything of my reception by Dr. Todd when I called upon him. The deacons of the church asked me to bring letters of recommendation from some of the ministers of Newark. Drs. Brinsmade, Condit and Eddy, all Presbyterians, commended me to their friendship and regard. I called on Dr. Todd at his home. He was away from home at the time, so I left the letters and called later. He said to me: "You are the man who left those letters here?" I said I was. His reply was, "You have got no character. You have left it where you came from. The people here are cute and you have got to be honest to a penny and study like a bull frog." I thought this more forcible than friendly. However, being a stranger, I concluded to let it go and bide my time. In a few weeks a child died in

one of the families of the church. I went to Dr. Todd to ask him about the ceremonies. He told me to go ahead. I knew I had no credentials, but I went on all the same. Then I found that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had not been observed for a long while, and Dr. Todd was engaged to officiate. This was, I think, in the spring of 1850. There were about eight members, males and females, on the rolls of the church. They had had no regular preaching for a long time or regular service. They did not, (so it appeared to me) feel like attending the other churches. Some few of them went to the First Church and some were Baptists; a very few were Methodists, but, such as there were, were Independent Methodists or reformed Methodists. There was a society of that kind in the west part. The building in which we worship was the church in which they worshipped. It was torn down and re-erected on the present site. The materials for the superstructure were brought from the west part prior to 1846. The pews and windows are new. It is the oldest edifice, for church purposes, in town.

Probably for two years after I had labored here it seemed as though nothing had been accomplished. The spring of 1850 I felt that I wanted to be under the care of the Berkshire Association of Congregational Ministers, and I went to Williamstown on the 4th day of June, 1850. There was only the one association of Congregational churches in the county. It brought me in contact with all the ministers of our order. I was most agreeably surprised, after the opening of the meeting, when Dr. Todd arose and said that the Second Congregational church in Pittsfield had taken a new start, that they had a new man. They had started a Sabbath School and the man was present to be given authority to preach the gospel. I took this as making amends for my first reception. I was turned over to a special committee to sound me theologically and spiritually. They recommended me as a candidate for the approval of the association. Then the association took me in hand and plied me with questions as to my orthodoxy and as to my reasons for entering the ministry and as to my piety, and, last of all, I was to read my sermon. I was scared all

the way through. I lost my connection in a part of my sermon and I could not find it, so they let up on me and voted that I be licensed for four years. The agony was over. Then I looked for a vote to be placed under some minister's care. They gave me more than I expected, so I was partially fledged. I stayed in Williamstown at the house of that godly woman, Mrs. Dunsett, who lived not far from Deacon Smedley. I returned to Pittsfield the day after, with my human commission in my pocket. I preached right along until a council was called August 13, 1850, at which time I was ordained in the First Church, the use of which was tendered to us for the purpose, our church being too small for the audience. Dr. Heman Humphrey was moderator of the association and Rev. J. J. Dana was scribe. Most of the ministers of Berkshire were present. Rev. E. P. Rogers, at that time pastor of the Plane Street Presbyterian Church, Newark, N. J., preached the sermon. He was a colored man, the first to preach from that pulpit. This E. P. Rogers' ancestors were owned by some of the ancestors of Dr. Todd. They were shipwrecked upon the coast of Connecticut. They were slaves. This man was a remarkable man. He was an able preacher. He had unusual gifts as a poet. A little before our civil war, he desired most strongly to visit the land of his forefathers. He went. He contracted the deadly fever of that climate and died there.

I was full fledged after my ordination. Before and after this I would read some of my sermons to Drs. Humphrey, Todd and Harris of the South Church. They very kindly heard me patiently and the people of the town were very kind to me. In 1857, November 8th, I was invited to take charge of the Liberty Presbyterian Church of Troy. I did not see my way clear to accept. Then they proposed to have me preach on alternate Sabbaths. My people were not willing to have me do so, so I declined. At about this time there were evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. I felt it very sensibly myself and I made known my feelings to one of my deacons. He threw cold water on my suggestion, but I was persistent in my course and said to the deacon that

I wished to have, for two weeks, nightly meetings and I desired Mr. Rogers' assistance. He protested, saying we would have to pay Rev. E. P. Rogers' expenses if he came, and that they could not pay my own salary even. I told him I would try to pay his traveling expenses out of my own limited means. I opened correspondence with Mr. Rogers, urging him to come over and help us. It was truly a Macedonian call. Two weeks he labored here, and, on the first Sunday morning, I felt so rejoiced that I went to Dr. Todd before the morning service and told him that God was pouring out his Spirit upon us and asked the prayers of his church for us. I think thirty became hopefully converted, as they say in the Presbyterian church, and united with some church.

I will relate an incident. I told a woman on whom I called on a Sabbath afternoon to have a talk with about her soul, that we had been holding weekly meetings and I had hoped to have seen her at them. She replied by saying that she had been trying to get to the meetings but had been hindered. Then I asked her if she would come that Sunday evening. She said that she would try. She was there and I had good reason to believe that she came to the light. The Baptist minister called on her and so did I. We both were in the house at the same time. He, however, got the start of me and of course baptized her; but we, too, had accessions, and the deacon of whom I have spoken made an apology, acknowledging himself to have been in the wrong. Another man in church showed his opposition. He also made an apology. The revival added to the strength of the church numerically, but spiritually the other churches were more helpful. Some things which were embarrassing before were now removed. There were those who kicked against Calvinism as accepted and understood in our church. They would precipitate their views upon you upon all occasions nearly. I made up my mind to meet the question scripturally as well as I could. I preached a sermon upon the text Romans 8: 29th or 30th verse, I have forgotten which. I then waited for developments. The first which I heard was that they had accepted the doctrine as I had presented it, and no more trouble appeared on that sub-

ject. It was not the sermon but the Spirit of God which bore the truth to their hearts.

I think it was sometime in 1853 that I had a call to a church in Portland, Maine. My people protested against my leaving so I declined to accept. After this the best offer I ever had came from the Talcot Street Church, Hartford, Conn. It was in the best pecuniary condition. They had a fund for the maintenance of the gospel, and I came near going. The opposition here was strong against my leaving and consequently I declined. I was well aware that it was up-hill work here, but, though this was so, yet there were some advantages. It was a small place; the school advantages were good; my family was growing and it was not pleasant to be moving from place to place. I worked at my trade and had a garden. My rent was less than I would have to pay in the cities and there was more house room, and, above all, it seemed to be the place that the Lord assigned to me; so I continued in the ministry here for thirteen years and six months, or until July 1863.

After I had been nearly seven years here I bargained for a building lot, the one upon which my house now stands. I had not a dollar to pay on it, but I was given a deed by the gentleman who owned it. After a while the church paid me some money and, as a first payment, I turned over to the owner of the lot forty dollars. I planted the lot year after year. But I was restless; I was paying rent and had nothing to show but receipts. Then I looked over my married life and saw that I had paid enough rent to have owned a place. I began to cast about as to what steps to take to apply a remedy. I knew that there was great wealth in the First Church, and how could I make available a few hundred dollars? I went to Dr. Todd with my plans and asked him if I could not, through him, compass the object I had in view. His answer was that there was wealth in his church, but it was not sanctified wealth. I think it probable he tried a little. But nothing came of it. I thought I would try in another direction, so I went to the late Governor G. N. Briggs and stated to him my plan, which was to get four gentlemen to lend me two hundred dollars, fifty dollars to get the lumber, or a part of it, on the ground, and I

would give a lien on it, as I had secured a building lot. Without the least hesitation he said, "I will loan you fifty dollars. Go among your abolition friends and secure the balance." The first man after the interview with Governor Briggs whom I asked for a loan of fifty dollars said he had not the cash though he had property. I found I was balked, but Governor Briggs interested himself in the matter. He saw Abraham Burbank, a contractor and builder, and told him about it. Mr. Burbank said, "Governor, if you will give Mr. Harrison fifty dollars, I will give him the same amount." In a few days I saw the Governor. He asked which I would have him do, loan me fifty dollars or give me twenty-five dollars right out. I said either way I would be grateful to him. He said he would give me twenty-five dollars right out, and that he had drawn up a subscription paper and given it to his son to go around with to secure one hundred and fifty dollars more. I thanked him but said I would not have his son do that but I would do it myself. His reply was, "I like to see a man with ambition." I did go around and secured a nucleus in money for a home for my family. In the fall of 1858 we moved into a house which we could call our own. I suppose I was in debt about one hundred and fifty dollars, to three persons fifty dollars each. I laid the matter before a friend. He thought the money could be secured from the Berkshire County Savings Bank by placing a mortgage on the property, which I did. But afterwards I found I had made a financial blunder. It was three hundred dollars instead of one hundred and fifty. I had to pay seven per cent. interest and I gave my note for one hundred and fifty dollars to the builder. I aimed to discharge the mortgage which the Savings Bank held. I paid not far from one hundred dollars of interest. I was housed comfortably in my own shanty after years of anxiety and toil, and, I may say, of prayer. After my own house was done I was pained to observe the dilapidated state of our house of worship. It was a surprise to some to know how we could hold a congregation together. The building was almost flat on the ground; you could see the ground through the cracks of the floor. It was most uncomfortable in exceedingly cold

weather; so I urged our people to make an effort to repair the building and proposed to them to raise one hundred dollars among themselves, and I would try to raise the balance among our friends out of town. They took hold and I asked Dr. Todd to draw up a paper setting forth our needs, which he did. We had the church raised two feet, a room in the basement lathed and plastered and fitted up comfortably and we worshipped in it while the upper part was being fixed up. The whole inside was changed, new pews and other things done which made our church more comfortable and really inviting. We had dedicatory services when it was completed. Everything went on pleasantly for several years.

In 1862 an event occurred which produced some unpleasantness. To remedy it would occasion a rupture in the church, and I thought it better for me to retire from the pulpit, which I did in July, having been dismissed by a mutual council. Then I was employed by the National Freedmen's Relief Society to solicit aid for the Freedmen of the sea islands of South Carolina. While engaged in this service I received a dispatch from Gov. John A. Andrew, wishing me to meet him on the arrival of the 9 A. M. train from Boston, at the depot. This was on the 31st day of July, 1863. I was there upon the arrival of the train and was introduced to him by some one who knew us both. He said he wanted a man to go to South Carolina, that the 54th had met a sad disaster at Fort Wagner, that a large number of men had been killed with the Colonel, R. G. Shaw. He desired a man to go and express the sympathy of the Commonwealth. The Governor asked me if I would go. I wanted to know how much time he would give me to consider it. He said he would be in the county a week and that I could have that time to consider, as he was on his way to Lenox to see the widow of Col Shaw. On my way from the depot I met Dea. J. H. Dunham of the South Church. I told him of the Governor's proposal and asked him what he thought of it. Before he had time to answer me I told him I would go; so, in less than an hour I saw the Governor and told him I would go. He said he would prepare the necessary documents and have them ready for me.

I went directly home and told my wife that Gov. Andrew wanted me to go to South Carolina and that I had promised him that I would go. But the Governor had another object in view, and that was that I should be the chaplain of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. I think it very probable that Dr. Mark Hopkins had something to do with my appointment. He did intimate something of the sort by saying that a position of the kind would enable me to lay something by for my family. But another motive which influenced me was that I had persuaded a number of men to go to the war who had left their families which were as dear to them as mine was to me. I could not bear that thought; so the following week I left my family and home on my mission to South Carolina, by way of New York, on a government transport. But when I reached New York the steamer had already her complement of passengers for the return trip. I had to wait some eight days before I could embark. The first difficulty I encountered after I had received my transportation papers was that I could not get subsistence on board the steamer because I was a colored man. I spoke to the captain. He told me that I must provide my subsistence on shore to take with me. I did the best I could under the circumstances. I bought a ham and gave one-half to have the other half cooked, and bought some other things, such as bread, cake and cheese, smoked beef and so on. I embarked a little after noon in the month of August at about 3 o'clock.

It was a beautiful sight to pass from the harbor on the bosom of the great deep on our way to the seat of war. It was not a warship but a transport and she had only one brass cannon on the forward deck. But there was war material on board below deck of which I may speak hereafter. That which marred my feelings was the fact that I could not obtain subsistence on board, the same as other men, because of my color. The very things which I had procured on shore I had no appetite for. Then, to increase my trouble, I had no decent place to sleep. I had to climb over kegs of powder to reach a bunk. There was scarcely any light. We had been about two hours out from New York when there

were indications of a storm and it was not long before it came down in a very hard rain. Those on deck started for shelter. I found a place but was ordered from it. I was not allowed in the cabin. I think the captain was a rebel at heart. His name was Gadsden. The name of the steamer was the Arago. I found a place which led to the steerage and I sat on the stairs all night. It afforded shelter from the rain. The only annoyance which I had was from the ship's carpenter; he was drunk. He kept going up and down the narrow passage way. He had no peace himself and he gave me no peace. He said there were ninety tons of powder on the boat and if the lightning struck her we would be blown to the devil. He seemed to be more afraid of the devil than of anything else. Monday morning the sun rose beautifully in the east. I felt that it was incumbent upon me to protest against the treatment which I had received. I went aft and took my seat and began writing in my diary about the treatment I had received the day before. A man came to me and asked if I was taking reckonings. I told that I was not; that I had not been decently treated on the steamer; that I had no place to sleep, and, so far as subsistence was concerned, I could get none. He expressed his sympathy in words and left. Then another man came to learn my story. He, like the priest in the parable, passed by and went on. Just at that juncture I began to wish that Col. Higginson was on board with all my heart. I had no reason to suppose that he was. I had not heard of his being a passenger. But he was the last who came to me. I was surprised to see him. He had been commissioned by Governor Andrew to raise a Colored regiment in the south, which he did, and I supposed he was south. But he was on the steamer and he came to me to learn about the affair. I told him. He went to the captain and I do not know what their talk was, but this I know, that my meals were given me in the cabin and a decent place was given me in which to sleep. I had no further trouble on that voyage. On the fourth day from New York we reached Hilton Head. There we disembarked. I was some seventeen miles from Beaufort, S. C., where were the headquarters of Gen. Saxton, command-

ing the department of the South. I presented my official documents to the general in command. He greeted me most kindly and ordered me to repair to the public house. But I did not go. I found in the General's office a Methodist minister who had preached for me in Pittsfield. He made me welcome to his house, which was confiscated property. There were some splendid residences there. I told the commanding general what treatment I received at the commencement of my voyage from New York. He assured me that I should have better treatment on my return. I found a boarding place with an old colored man and his wife until I returned north, which I did in about six weeks. I preached to the people on Sundays. They had four services on Sabbath days, at 6 o'clock A. M., at 10.30 A. M., at 3 P. M. and 7 P. M. The first was a praise service, which lasted two hours. The house was filled at all the services. They were Baptists and members of Dr. Fuller's church. The place was called the Praise House. The regular meeting house was occupied by the government as a storehouse. There were a number of people left behind when the rebels fled from Beaufort to the main land. They fled when they saw the flag of the Union army floating from the staff at Hilton Head when that place was captured by our forces. Some of those who were left behind were house servants. There were some field hands among them. On the other islands you would find many more field hands. Beaufort was the resort of the more cultured of the white people. It was a beautiful place.

There is a point to which I wish to call attention. I met at Beaufort, to my surprise, a gentleman with whom I had been intimately acquainted in Philadelphia quite a number of years before. He had originally lived in Beaufort. He was a slaveholder and all his wealth probably was in that kind of property. He had been convinced of the sinfulness of slave holding long before the war. He wanted to rid himself of the sin, but the laws of the state hindered him from doing so unless he moved out of the state. This he did. He impoverished himself by thus doing. He moved them to Cincinnati, Ohio, and emancipated them. He was so reduced pecuniarily that it

drew forth the sympathy of friends. They helped him and his family to Philadelphia and there I became acquainted with him. A company of gentlemen started a paper in the interest of human freedom. I was working at my trade. I was employed to canvass the city for subscribers. It was a weekly paper. Probably I secured two hundred subscribers. This gentleman was the editor. His name was Brisbane. He was a Baptist. I found him at his own home in Beaufort, where he had been a slaveholder. He held some office under the government and his finances had greatly improved. It was a pleasant meeting. While in Beaufort I went to the hospitals to see the wounded soldiers of the regiment of which subsequently I became chaplain. I was five weeks in South Carolina and when I had decided to return north and had completed my arrangements, I was invited by Gen. Gilmore of Morris Island to visit Morris and Folly Islands, and to return on any government transport. I felt myself honored by the invitation and it gave an opportunity of seeing some of the men whom I had persuaded to enlist, so I went and spent part of a day and night, after which I returned to Beaufort.

While on Morris Island I learned that I was elected chaplain of the regiment. It was the first intimation I had of its consummation. The following week I took steamer for the north. It was the same vessel upon which I came south. I had no trouble about subsistence and, so far as sleeping was concerned, on deck was the most comfortable as the vessel was so crowded. I reached home all right. In due time I started for Boston to see Governor Andrew. He paid my expenses from funds of the Commonwealth, I suppose. I took my leave and was about to proceed to the depot to take the afternoon train, but finding that I had ample time, I thought I would call and see a brother minister. While sitting in his home I picked up the afternoon paper and, running over the columns, I found that there was a commission waiting for me in the adjutant's office. I was so surprised at this that I called the attention of my friend to it, for I supposed the adjutant would have notified me. I asked my friend to go with me to the State House to make some investigation. He

readily consented. We went to the office and asked for the adjutant. I told what I saw in the paper that afternoon. He said that a commission was issued and had been waiting for some weeks for me. He gave it to me. Then I asked how soon I was to get ready. He replied by saying that when I got ready for duty he would issue orders for me to report to the chief officer of the regiment. When I reached home I showed my commission to my wife and friends. But I had not the money to get my outfit or to buy supplies for my family, so I went to the Hon. Marshall Zenas Crane, father of our present Lieutenant Governor, to ask a loan of twenty-five dollars, which he readily consented to. Another gentleman, Henry Stearns, a manufacturer, advised me not to go with less than one hundred dollars. He offered to give it to me.

I put in for my family one barrel of flour. I had raised a porker and had it slaughtered and salted down and provided myself with a rubber blanket, rubber coat, and some other things such as a chaplain's coat and a blouse, tin pans, cups and tin plates, and some army blankets which I got from the quartermaster. In a month from the time I received my commission I reported to the adjutant of the Commonwealth that I was ready for orders. He ordered me to report at Morris Island, South Carolina, to the commander of the regiment. Early in the month of November I embarked on board the Arago, under different circumstances than before. I was a full fledged chaplain of the army, recognized by all the officers on board. There was a distinguished general on board who was a gentleman in every fiber of his being. He was for a while a commander of our department. He would occasionally pass by our encampment. The captain of the Arago was very different in his bearing toward me. We reached Hilton Head very comfortably and I went to Beaufort to see the friends I had made when I first visited there. When I was there before I told them probably I would return in a few months. They wished to know if I would buy some things for them when I reached home and bring them when I returned. There were two women who gave me twenty dollars. I mention it to show what confidence they had in me, an entire stranger. I

got the articles which they wanted. They were very grateful. I stayed only a little while in the city of Beaufort, my regiment being on Morris Island, some seventy or eighty miles up the coast. I had not been mustered into service, which was very necessary. On the 12th day of November, 1863, I was placed in the United States Army by being mustered in, making oath to support the government of the United States, to serve three years unless sooner discharged. I did not know but that in all respects I would be treated by the officers of the government the same as other chaplains of a fairer hue. But I did learn it by the time pay day came around. The paymaster declined to pay the men of the regiment the same amount paid to white troops because they were men of African descent. I think it was through Secretary Stanton that Gov. Andrew made the promise for equal pay, and Massachusetts raised three regiments with this understanding. But the paymasters decided otherwise. The first intimation I had of it was when our Col. Hallowell said to me one day, "Mr. Harrison, I do not think that the paymasters will give you the pay which chaplains get." I said I would like to see the paymaster myself, and I asked him to let me know when he came. I looked anxiously for him. He had come and gone. The other officers got their pay, but the rank and file were neglected. Three months passed and no pay. I knew that my family's means were nearly used up. What to do I hardly knew, but bore up under it as well as I could. My wife and six children, a debt of three hundred dollars on my house, and grocery bills. I had a hard burden to carry. I grew sick under the pressure. But that promise kept me up, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." God had his way in all this thing, though I did not see it then, and I more and more observe that good Providence.

It seemed to be a settled purpose of paymasters to ignore the rights of the colored soldiers. Over three months I had been without pay while the officers were regularly paid. In February, 1864, our regiment was ordered to break camp and to rendezvous at Hilton Head. It was on Friday night when we started. Early Saturday morning we arrived, disem-

barked and marched to our camp ground at Morris Island. I had bound my floor boards and nailed them together so that they would be at hand as a floor for my tent, and I saw them when taken from the army wagon and placed on the ground where my tent was to be located. I started to get some food for that day and the next. I had been gone but a very short time, but, as short as it was, when I returned there was not a piece to be seen of a board as large as your hand. All had been appropriated by some of the soldiers. I got along very well, so far as my health was concerned, by care. The water was miserable and produced sickness. But in that I was cautious. I do not think that I drank much of the water, but every twenty-four hours I would drink all of the lemonade I could swallow down. I messed with the officers of the regiment for a short time.

Upon the 1st day of January, 1863, President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into force. It was an occasion of jollification for the loyal north, and especially for the colored people north and south, so, upon Morris Island, large preparation was made to celebrate the occasion. The orator had been chosen and had consented to give the address and orders were issued from headquarters as to the observance of the day. There were to be marching, music and everything which would contribute to make the occasion interesting. After marching and counter-marching they formed around the platform, which was a packing box. After some preliminaries had been gone through with and the playing of some national airs by the band, the orator ascended the platform and began his address. In the course of his remarks I saw that he began to sway to and fro and his eyebrows began to knit. I could not account for it. It soon reached my ken that the man was pretty well loaded. He was the body-servant of a distinguished general on the Island. That told the story. While in the midst of his harangue the top of the box caved in, and, as he reached the bottom, he exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I like your principles, but d—m your platform." It was mortifying to every soldier and officer on the ground. The orator was unable to proceed and the chaplain had to fill up the gap.

After some music, the men were dismissed and repaired to their tents.

Another event which occurred on Morris Island. There was a Colonel by the name of James Montgomery who was in command of the 2nd South Colored Infantry. He had been noted among the free state men in Kansas in those trying days. I made his acquaintance on Morris Island. He sent me an invitation to dine with him and all chaplains of colored regiments to do likewise. I found him a very pleasant man indeed. Though several months with my regiment, I only had a chance to preach once a Sunday to the men. Sunday was the busiest day in camp. It was inspection day. Every street in camp was inspected by the officers, tents were overhauled and everything subjected to scrutiny. The sanitary conditions were looked after. It took a good share of the day to do this. A chaplain can visit the sick, as it is his duty to do. He can visit the men in their tents and secure their good will, write letters for them and correspond with their friends in case of sickness or death. His influence has a wider sweep than he may be aware of. I have been in various parts of the country since the war. Men have hailed me on the streets and told me when they saw me on those Islands in South Carolina. Profanity and gambling are the most prevalent sins in army life, I think, and especially card-playing. They resort to various devices to throw a cloak over their evil doings. I found out one thing, which was this; our colonel did not want a chaplain, black or white, yet he always treated me with respect. He early took occasion to say to me that if I wanted money to come to him and not to ask the other officers. He never addressed me by my official title; he always called me Mr. Harrison.

I will take my leave of Morris Island for the present and return to Hilton Head. I told the colonel that my boards for the floor of my tent were stolen. He chided me, saying that I was a pretty soldier to have my floor boards stolen from me and to try to find them. That was out of the question, though I hunted for them. In a few days we were ordered to break camp for an expedition to Florida. I was quite unwell and

found some infirmities developing, probably from irregularity in my meals. I became weak and very languid. The lieutenant-colonel came along on horseback and I gave him a salute. He reined up his horse and asked me if I was going on the expedition with them. I told him that I was not able to go as he knew my condition. His reply was that if he was in command he would excuse me, and he thought the colonel would. I knew to the contrary. I saw the colonel and told him I would be glad if he would excuse me. He said that he could not, so I had in part concluded that I must go. I had not walked long when I met the surgeon. He asked me if I was going with the regiment. I said, "you know what condition I am in; I am not well." He said, "I will excuse you. Look after my tent." I regard it as an interposition of Divine Providence. I saw a post surgeon. He asked me why I had not gone with my regiment. I told him that I was sick and had been excused from duty. He told me to put out my tongue. I did so. He told me that I ought to go to the hospital. I replied that if I could go to Beaufort I could get good care as I had friends there; so I started for that place with the surgeon's certificate in my hand. The quarter-master would not give me a pass. He said that orders came from the commanding general to give no passes to Beaufort as the small pox was raging there. But I learned that there was a pay-master at Hilton Head, so I thought I would try to get some money from him. I asked him to pay me. He declined decidedly. I asked why? He said that my being of African descent was a bar to my being paid a regular chaplain's stipulated sum. I asked him to put it down so I could have it in black and white. He did so. He was only an assistant. So I found a chief-paymaster and I laid the matter before him, but he would not put his name to the paper. He said that it was all right, so there I was in a predicament. This whole matter about refusing to pay me you will find the account of in Greeley's History of the Rebellion.

That afternoon or night I reached Beaufort and placed myself under the care of friends, who were surprised to observe the change which had come over me. The irregularity of my

meals and the drain upon my system had had much to do with my appearance. Added to this was the mental strain. I could send no money to my family or get any myself. But I did lay the matter before God in prayer, and I could say that I was actuated in joining the army by a desire to do good among the men, some of whom I had induced to do the same thing. I did pray that God would help me in my extremity. Then I knew I must show my faith by my works, so I drew up my application for a furlough to come north. But it must meet red tape. It must go from subordinates to the highest officer in command and it must return through the same channels. The general commanding was four hundred miles down the coast. In two weeks an answer was returned, granting me twenty days' furlough to go north. I hardly expected it, though I hoped for it. I made ready for the next steamer. While at Beaufort I told Rev. Mansfield French that I had received no money from the government as chaplain. The paymaster declined to pay me because I was of African descent. He thought he could bridge the difficulty as he was well acquainted with the assistant paymaster, Maj. Porter, and would lay the matter before him. He did so, but Maj. Porter said he was powerless as the chief paymaster had decided against it. Mr. French and the Major had several interviews in regard to it and finally they came to an agreement. Maj. Porter said that he would advance me sixty dollars and he would write to Washington, and, if the authorities approved, he would give me the balance. If they did not approve, I must refund what he had given or he would have to pay it back to the government from his own pocket. I took it on these conditions. It hampered me very much. I could not spend it, knowing upon what conditions I had received it. It had been suggested to me that probably I was the victim on whom that whole matter would turn, and so I was, as you will see later on, and I regard it as another interposition of Divine Providence. After having gotten my furlough and received the money, I prepared to start for the north. The steamer on which I had made the voyage three times had not returned. I was compelled to take another, the Fulton. I had hardly been on board before the passengers, one after

another, showed great kindness to me. Some of them said that my place was at the captain's table, and that was my place during the voyage. Then I told them that the money I had was given me under such circumstances that I did not feel that I could spend it. It reply they said it was the wish of the passengers that I should occupy that seat and they would make it all right about the expense of subsistence; so I complied. There were quite a number of Massachusetts people on board, and some three hundred rebel prisoners. The trip was very pleasant to New York. Before we reached New York the passengers made up a purse for me. My coming back was not known to my family. They and their friends were all glad to see me, but, as I had to put myself under medical treatment, I concluded not to return south if I could get my discharge; so I wrote my resignation, endorsed by my physician, and forwarded it to Governor Andrew and he secured my honorable discharge. I also told him the paymaster had declined to pay me because of my being of African descent. I was not able for some time to do anything, but, when I became able, I resumed my old employment in behalf of the Freedmen, more successfully because I had been among them and knew from personal observation what I was talking about.

As our soldiers advanced and took possession of those sea islands, they found the colored people very destitute of the necessities of life. The inwardness of slavery had been brought to the surface, hence appeals came to the loyal North for aid. It was found that the slaves of the South were but a little removed in condition from the beasts of the field, so agents were appointed to visit towns and villages to solicit clothing and money to relieve the destitute. This is how I became an agent. This gave a chance for me to visit most of the churches in the western counties of Massachusetts, those lying on the east and west sides of the Connecticut River. I met with very generous reception. I will mention one place which I visited, South Hadley, and spent the Sabbath. The minister was away on his vacation. The officers told me that they thought their minister would be willing to have me occupy his pulpit the following Sabbath, but, to avoid any embarrassment, they

would write him. He gave his consent readily so I was on hand the following Saturday and had the morning service given to me to present my cause on Sunday morning. The afternoon of the same day I was to be at South Hadley Falls. The morning was beautiful. The ladies of the seminary sat in the body of the church. The minister was not present, having been called home to attend a funeral. It was a fine array of young ladies who were being schooled and disciplined for larger spheres of usefulness and duty. They had never probably been addressed by a son of Ham. There was no explosion, nor did a collapse occur.

Another intervention of Providence occurred. The Rev. Dr. Emerson Davis, of Westfield, had been written to about a man wanted by a Newport, R. I., Congregational church. He called to see me and advised me to open correspondence with the committee, which I did. The committee asked me to visit them, which I did the last week in July, 1865. They wished me to commence my labors the next day, which was the Sabbath. I think that there were eleven persons present in the morning and probably not many more at night. The next Sabbath probably a few more. The congregation had got scattered as the church had been closed nearly all summer. Each Sabbath more members of the old congregation came back. We soon recruited the Sabbath school. By autumn we were getting along comfortably. I moved my family from Pittsfield to Newport. The people seemed to be satisfied. The Home Missionary Society of Rhode Island appropriated some money quarterly. The church was the oldest of the colored churches in the city. They had a Baptist society and a Methodist society, more than the permanent population warranted. The society, the care of which I had, was the most able financially. Their church edifice was finely located in the heart of the city. I was precise as to the time of closing. The people came from nearly all parts of the country to earn money and they were shut in doors all the week and needed recreation, so I would conduct services Sunday night with that thought under consideration, so generally we had good congregations.

An event of importance took place while I was preaching in

Newport, the marriage of my oldest daughter to a man in Newark, N. J. Our family, after my daughter's marriage, was composed of four children, my wife and myself. The people were very kind to us, but my objection to Newport was that there were too many churches for the population. After the season was over, there were only people enough for one good church. I did not like to live at that "poor dying rate." There was too little spirituality in the churches. The members were likely to be called to attend a dinner party or supper on Sunday as well as at any other time. To me it was somewhat disheartening, so I put out a feeler for another field of labor. I wrote to one of the deacons of the Sanford Street Church, Springfield, Mass., asking how they were getting along. I received an immediate answer saying that they were in want of a supply for the pulpit and that they gave \$50.00 per month and that they wanted me to visit them, which I did. I spent a Sabbath with them. After the service Sunday, they wanted to know if I would supply the pulpit for six months. I told them I would do so for no shorter time than one year. Then they got me into a corner and wanted to know then and there if I would come for a year. I did not have time to consult with any one, though I was well acquainted with Dr. Samuel Buckingham and all the other Congregational pastors; so I made up my mind to leave Newport. In December, 1866, I occupied the pulpit of the Sanford Street Church. It was the old church which John Brown, of Harper's Ferry memory, used to worship in with his friends. The friends in Newport were sorry because I had declined to remain longer with them, and this sorrow extended to the other churches. I was a welcome guest in my summer visits.

There was one family of which I wish to make special mention, a Mr. Green and his wife who formerly lived in Philadelphia. They always provided me a room in their home, without money and without price, whenever I visited Newport. I made it a practice always to have worship in the family. Right after the morning meal Mr. Green would get the Bible for me to read and pray. He was not a christian professor. His wife was. He was rather a peculiar man. He

liked to argue on scripture and about religion. This I would never do with him and I have reason to believe that it was the best way with that man whose guest I was. The method which I pursued, under God, led him to Christ. I prayed for him. The last time I saw him alive was along in the 70's. I will advert to this again.

I desire to call your attention to my ministry in Springfield. I was not installed over the Springfield church, though acting pastor for nearly four years, and, under God, with some degree of success. After a year of labor there, there were evidences of the Spirit's presence. I felt it and there were others who shared in this feeling. We announced from the pulpit on Sunday that the following night there would be a meeting in the vestry, and all were invited to be present. A goodly number came and there were evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The invitation was given that if there were any present who desired to become christians, for them to rise. To my astonishment and joy two of my daughters were the first to rise, then another and another and so on, and we were in the midst of a revival and quite a number of hopeful conversions took place and it resulted in quite an accession to the church; some, who had been living in Springfield for years and had not connected themselves with any church, some were members of other churches. It was a blessed day for our little church. It probably contributed to this result that there were teachers in the Sabbath School members of the South Congregational Church of which Rev. Samuel G. Buckingham was pastor. For several communions we had additions. There was no difficulty in getting along with the people. But the officers had been Methodists and they did not understand our form of government. I will give you a sample. On a certain Sabbath afternoon, after I had preached and dismissed the congregation and had reached the street, one of the members (he was one I believe, of the oldest members) said to me, "Mr. Harrison, you have preached a good sermon, but if you preach that way, you cannot stay here." I did not ask him to explain, I replied, "My satchel is always ready for me to take it up and leave."

There were many things which made my Springfield pastorate pleasant, one of which was this. I had engaged a tailor to make me a winter overcoat. The price was agreed upon. I told him that I could not pay him down for it, but I would do so in installments. So, at the time it was to be done, I called for it. I took ten dollars from my pocket to pay on account. He told me to put the money in my pocket again as the coat was paid for. I was more than surprised; I was astonished. I asked him who had paid for it. He said Rev. H. M. Parsons, Rev. Dr. Buckingham and the Rev. R. G. Greene. I was very kindly treated by the citizens of Springfield. I then thought of trying to make some provision for my family as I was laboring under some physical ailments which are still clinging to me, so, in March, 1868, I took out a policy of insurance on my life for the benefit of my family in case of my death, in the Security Life Insurance and Annuity Company of New York. The premium was \$11.55 quarterly. I kept it up a number of years. The policy called for \$2000. After a number of years I found it was too heavy for me to carry. I had it reduced to \$1000. The premium was reduced one-half, which I carried a few years, when the company became defunct. Then I lost all which I had put into it, some six hundred dollars. All my family had died except two children. Then I thought I would try another institution which is called the New England Mutual Aid Society. \$5000 was to be paid upon the death of a member of his family. But the assessment upon the death of a member of the class to which I belonged was \$5.25. They died so fast that I collapsed after paying in one hundred dollars. I was not able to bear the pressure financially. If the amount had been put in the savings bank I should have been well off. I have the documents to corroborate what I have stated above.

I will now speak further of my ministry which continued for three years and seven months. In the summer of 1870, I think it was, I was invited to take charge of a church in Portland, Maine. It appeared in the daily papers of Springfield that I had a call to Portland. It was the third or fourth

call to that church. The first was in 1852. The next was before the great fire in Portland, and the next after the fire. So many calls from one church have not been common. But the scarcity of Congregational ministers, and not my ability as a preacher, or popularity, was the cause. The first time I visited them they gave me a call. But the church here opposed my leaving, and besides, I did not like going from place to place as it would interfere with the schooling of my children. But my ministry was somewhat handicapped as I have intimated earlier in this communication. The most of the men who were members were connected with a secret society. They had solicited me to join. The invitation remained good for six months and no initiation fee was asked of me if I would join. I have never had an inclination that way. On the other hand I would not oppose any one so doing. It did not sit well because I would not join them, I think; so, when the call came from Maine, one of the deacons asked what I was going to do, whether I had decided to accept. My reply was that I intended to go the latter part of the week on a visit to Portland and should be away the next Sabbath. The man volunteered to get a supply for the pulpit the ensuing Sabbath. I told him I should return after an absence of one Sabbath, and, if I decided to go as a supply, I would inform them; or, if the people desired me to leave the pulpit, I would do that whether I accepted the call from Maine or not. So I started for Maine and remained one Sabbath and thence to Boston. Instead of coming directly to Springfield I was pressed in spirit to go to Newport, R. I., where I had been just a month before. I was unable to resist the feeling which came over me, so I bought my ticket some time before the train left Boston for Newport. I was glad that I had decided to go as I think will be seen. I reached Newport all right and went directly to the house of my friend. To my surprise the minister came up at the same time, three of us confronting each other. The minister of the Congregational Church of Newport, who was my successor, came to learn of my friend whether I had left Springfield and had gone to Portland. My friend told him that he had not heard any-

thing to that effect from me. The minister asked when I would return to Springfield as he wanted to see me before I left. I told him I should leave the next day. He urged me to call and see him that day, which I did. He said that he had several letters from the committee of the Sandford Street Church of Springfield, asking him to come to Springfield and preach for them, with a view to his becoming their pastor as I had gone to Portland. I told him I had not decided to go to Portland, but I should give up the pulpit in Springfield upon my return home, which I did. I left Newport Friday morning and reached Springfield the same day. On Saturday morning I asked one of the deacons of the church to call a meeting of the deacons that evening as I had important business to lay before them. He said that Saturday night was a bad time to get them together. I said I must see them, so he got them to meet in the lecture room. I laid my matter before them and concluded by saying "I will relinquish the pulpit upon the first of the coming month." All I asked of them was to pay me up to that time. They were taken by surprise. I told them it was an underhand piece of work, as they knew. I was ready to give up the pulpit at any time. Then I decided to make a favorable response to the Portland invitation. I am ready to confess it did upset some of my plans. Two of my children were in the high school of Springfield, whose term for education expired in two years. They had been in the Pittsfield schools and then in the Newport schools. They had made their mark as scholars under trying circumstances. Prior to our moving to Newport there were separate schools for white and colored pupils. At the commencement of the term these schools were merged into one; in other words, white and colored children attended the same schools. This was probably accomplished through the effort of Col. Thomas W. Higginson, of whom I have spoken in relation to another matter. He was at this time a resident of Newport and a member of the school committee. There was a strong prejudice to encounter on the part of white pupils and their parents. My children were the first to encounter this prejudice. One of them was in the high school, the first

to enter. They had a spelling exercise and she spelled the school down. This enraged the boys. They made paper balls and threw them at her. The principal lost all control of the boys and my daughter was insulted by them; so, when school closed that day she made up her mind not to return. I was away from the city at the time making arrangements to take charge of the church at Springfield. When I returned I was informed of what had taken place and the gentlemen of the school board wrote me a very polite note expressing their regrets at the indignity heaped on my daughter and begging me to send her back and they would not allow it again. They intended to meet the issue then and there and not permit it to be done again. The battle was fought for others as well as for my own children. The difficulties which my children had to meet and overcome made it easier for those who came after them. There were no such obstacles to be met in Springfield. Others had preceded them and had graduated.

There was a marked difference between Newport and Springfield. The winter of 1866, when I came to Springfield, all the churches had festivals of various kinds. The little church to which I was called to minister was not behind the rest, save in their limited resources. They wanted to make something for the increase of their revenue. One of the devices resorted to was to secure an expensive wrapper or morning gown, richly trimmed, which was exposed for sale. The clergyman getting the highest number of tickets sold was to be the recipient of the garment. A committee was appointed to keep tally. The last night of the fair the announcement was made as to what clergyman had gotten the gown. The time had come for closing. The tickets were counted and the announcement was made that I was the winner. Amid the clapping of hands and the stamping of feet I was called out to receive a \$50.00 wrapper. I was somewhat elated. It was presented to me in a speech to which I responded as well as circumstances would allow. But I admit I felt some doubt. After I had concluded my speech, a recount was called for and it turned out that there was a mistake in the counting, and, instead of my getting the gown, it was awarded to my

friend, Rev. A. R. Potter of the State Street Baptist Church. So true is the proverb that there's many a slip between the cup and the lip. Nothing daunted, my people determined that their minister should have a wrapper and they provided me with one. They were devoted to me, so far as I could judge, with the exception of one or two men. I served them three years and six or seven months. I was not installed as pastor so that our relations were easily severed. That which caused me anxiety was the necessity of taking my children from school to enter them in another. But it was all for the best as the sequel, I think, shows. There had been but one colored graduate from the high school of Portland. My daughter was accorded all the respect she could ask, for she had as her class-mates some of the daughters of the wealthy people of Portland. She graduated with the respect and good wishes of teachers and scholars, and, as long as she lived she was invited to the class reunions, and, in their obituaries, they spoke most tenderly of her. Her sister had one more year to stay, but sickness, caused by those northeast winds, made it necessary to move her from Portland.

I began my work in Portland in 1870. In the winter of 1872 I received a letter inviting me to return and resume the pastorate of the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield. There seems to be a Providence in these things. One of the men of this church wrote to me in behalf of the church, desiring my return, and also saying in the same letter that the leading citizens promised to help the church pecuniarily if I would return. Old memories and ties were not without their influence. Then the congregation in Portland was small and there was another small congregation which was a split from the church of which I was the minister and which occurred years before I went among them. It was an embarrassment. I was somewhat perplexed, so the call from Pittsfield seemed to me to be Providential. The impaired health of some of the members of my family, the request to return to Pittsfield and the promised help in a pecuniary point of view were strong arguments in favor of a change. In February, 1872, the committee of the church asked me to make them a visit, which I

did. I spent two Sabbaths very pleasantly and then I returned to Portland. After some weeks they sent me a very urgent letter, wishing me to come. I told them the salary I was receiving and that I should expect the same amount. They promised to give that sum, so I decided, as soon as practicable, to move. My oldest single daughter was to graduate from the Portland high school that summer. They were preparing for their graduation. The ladies of her class told her they proposed that they all should have their class ring. She told them that she could hardly afford it. They said that she must not let that stand in the way; that they were going to purchase the ring for her. They wished her to go with them and have her finger measured, and she did. We moved from Portland, except the one to graduate; she stayed a month after we left. April, 1872, I resumed the pastorate of the Second Congregational Church of Pittsfield, where I have continued, by the help of God, unto the present time.

Above I spoke of a friend at whose house I was a guest at Newport, R. I., and how we had family worship whenever I spent with them a few days or weeks for rest. I had a letter from his wife saying that her husband was very ill, that there was hardly any hope of his recovery, but she wished I could see him (he was prepared for his end but that it was hard to give him up.) I allude to this case because I felt deeply interested in the man. The last time I saw him alive was when I visited him. On the following Sabbath I was invited to preach at the church of which his wife was a member. On Sunday morning, after worship, he asked if I was going to preach at his wife's church that night. I said I was and asked him if he would go. He said "Yes." His wife was a little behind when she heard him say "Yes." She clasped her hands and seemed to me to be offering an ejaculatory prayer. It surprised me when he said "Yes." He had been known to conduct his wife to the door of the church and then retire until the services were over and then conduct her home. But that night he went in and sat not far from the pulpit. The next morning after worship I took my leave of them, returning to Portland. After a few days I summoned enough courage to send

him as touching a letter as I was able, rehearsing his kindness to me and his hospitality and the little room in the side of the wall and his getting the Bible morning after morning; that I was anxious to know whether he had become a christian; but I said that whether he had become a christian or not I wished him to read the Scriptures daily with his wife and to pray, if it were but the Lord's prayer. I sent the letter but not without some misgivings as to how it would be received. Days passed and no reply came. Then I did fear that my influence had been lost. But, after a while, an answer came which was cheering. He said that he believed in Jesus Christ and accepted him as his Saviour. I afterward spent a few days in Newport. His wife spoke of the change which had come over her husband. Some of the members of the church in Newport said that the gospel seed had been sown by me, but I did not stay long enough to gather the fruit. It makes but little difference so it is gathered to the glory of the Master. There is a case analogous to this. Some few years ago, returning from a sun-rise prayer meeting, I met a gentleman who took my hand, and, as he did so, quoted the text, "Thou almost persuaded me to become a christian." That text from which you gave a sermon led me to Christ. When about leaving Portland I called upon a very sick young woman to take my leave of her. She said that if she and others were not saved it was not because I had not labored faithfully for them and with them. The thought expressed by our Lord, "Ye are my witnesses," is not inappropriate in this connection. There were but few admissions to the church during my pastorate in Portland. There was one peculiarity which I found. There were more widows in that place than in any other where I had been pastor. It was a seaport. Many of the men followed the sea and many had been lost at sea.

In April, 1872, I resumed my pastorate in Pittsfield, leaving my family in Portland until my house should be vacated so that I could occupy it. I found a debt of some three hundred dollars upon the church, one hundred of which was not a just debt, but it had to be paid all the same. The other was for an organ which the committee had bought. After I

had come back, the church was pressed for these debts. The debtors came to the minister. I urged the people to do their best in raising the money. I went among our friends out of town and they responded very generously. Then we had an entertainment. The net proceeds were a few dollars short of a hundred. The people were very much encouraged. Fifty dollars was paid on the organ and the committee told me to retain the balance on my salary as I had to move my family from Portland. I planted my garden and had everything arranged to move my family. I worked hard and in less than a week brought my family from that city.

Mine was not an isolated case of a minister being away from a church for some years and then returning to his old charge. There is a great deal in adaptation. I think that a man rarely loses interest in his first charge. There is a great deal in early associations. Then, the most of my children were born here and the most of them were buried here. No warmer friends have I had anywhere than in Pittsfield. I seemed to begin life anew. It was here where my expectation took a tangible form in the culmination of the ministry, upon which I had entered after a zigzag course in my earlier life. I was welcomed back. Though many of my old friends had passed away, still new ones sprang up, one of whom I will make particular mention of. She was a daughter of one of our old merchants. On the anniversary of my birth she would always present me with a ten dollar gold piece; then on Christmas ten dollars. This she did for years. A few years ago she passed to the beyond. I have occasionally such expressions of regard, which are truly cheering. We have had refreshing seasons spiritually which have helped us very much in the increase of our membership. The Sabbath school was a very helpful adjunct. The teachers were of our own people but their influence was far reaching. There are those who now speak of those by-gone days. None of those teachers are now living. I cannot recall to mind one. The last one died a few weeks ago, after being afflicted for years, unable even to attend church. We have not at present those to wholly fill their places. Many have gone to more inviting fields for secular

employments. But we are hopeful. Since the church has been repaired the basement is used every Saturday by a group of children. Some of the ladies of the First Church are teaching a class of girls to sew. Some twelve or fifteen attend and are getting along finely. The ladies find the materials and whatever the children make is given to them for their own use.

I have already spoken of the debt which I found against the church many years ago and had been cancelled. The church was in a bad condition, out of repairs, and I did not know what could be done about it. One of the rafters had snapped and the roof had sagged. Mr. Henry Stearns, of Stearnsville, met me on North street one day and asked me if our church was not out of repair. I said that it was but that we had no money to do anything about it, to which he replied that he would like to see the inside and some time he would go with me and look at the church, that it would be of no disadvantage to us. I gladly availed myself of his offer and, at his earliest convenience, he went with me. He took a chair and sat down and looked around. He said that the church needed repairs. He directed me to go on and have the repairs made and draw on him for six hundred dollars. He was an attendant at the Baptist Church, although not a member. I did not think it was wise to incur an expense to that amount. I believe in helping people to help themselves. They appreciate such help. Our church was repaired and we were encouraged.

About this time I wrote a pamphlet entitled "Pittsfield Twenty-five Years Ago." It was better received than I had expected. There were five hundred copies issued. The edition was long since exhausted. My next publication was "An Appeal of a Colored Man to his Fellow Citizens of a Fairer Hue." A thousand copies were issued. The next was a Centennial Discourse, which was delivered in the M. E. chapel of this town. The last was a lecture given in the chapel of the Congregational church, Williamstown. I was introduced by Mark Hopkins, D. D. He endorsed what I said, with one exception. The title of the lecture was "The Cause and Cure for the War." I advocated the employment of colored soldiers.

This was in 1862, and before the beginning of 1863 there were thousands of colored soldiers. In 1863, if colored troops had attempted to march through New York, they would have been murdered. In the draft riots of New York many colored people were killed. I soon found myself in another role, a political talker. I attended, upon invitation, a political meeting in Pittsfield. After the political lights of the party (Republican, of course,) had corruscated (congressmen and members of the legislature), I was called upon for a speech. I was the only representative of the children of Ham. The next thing I heard I was named as a campaign speaker. I was put down to make a speech in Worcester on a subsequent Saturday evening. I did not go however. I found that I could not be a minister and a political platform speaker too. I did sometimes go with politicians and make a talk in case of emergency, but at last I dropped out. There was, however, a source of financial help which enabled me to support my family, which was an agency to sell books. In that I was, on the whole, very successful. I did not give up my trade until a few years ago, when I was no longer able to work on the shoe bench. But, in all these years, the Lord helped me, and when I look back I am surprised at the way in which I have gotten along; myself and family have had shelter, food, raiment and fuel. God has withheld nothing from us which was needed, and now that I have reached old age, I can use the words of David, the sweet singer of Israel, "I have been young, now I am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." I do not know how much longer the Lord will give me strength to work. but I will work as long as I can.

ERRATA.

The following errors in the manuscript copy are hereby corrected by the author:

On page 7—speaking of the trip from Cleveland to Hudson should read 24 miles instead of 5 miles.

On page 13—speaking of my return home should read, after an absence of 3 years, instead of 3 months.

On page 30, top line should read Hilton Head instead of Morris Island.

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EAGLE PUBLISHING CO.,
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